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AN ANNOTATED LIST OF 1300 CLASSICS

By

F. SEYMOUR SMITH, F.L.A.

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Foreword by

EDMUND BLUNDEN

LONDON
NATIONAL BOOK COUNCIL

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FOREWORD

IN his latest work, which bears the signs of being a favourite for years to come—it is on Thomas Hardy's novels—Lord David Cecil utters a heresy on the topic of criticism. He maintains that what the critic is properly entitled to discuss is, not the second best bed mentioned in Shakespeare's will (a document which was probably quite unknown to Shakespeare), nor the dealings of Shelley with moneylenders, but—books. This subversive opinion is one which I have long hoped to see let loose by such a good critic.

Indeed it might be carried further. It could be argued that the essential critics have been the publishers themselves who originally decided that the Essays of Bacon, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Vanity Fair*, or *A Shropshire Lad* ought to be given to the world. The history of a house like Murray, Longmans, Macmillan (to mention only a few names) may not be luminous or obscure with deliberations on the principles of excellence in literature, but we see that these principles have been constantly kept in mind, and we see it in a succession of publications which insist on being read.

Yet here a difficulty arises; a highly pleasing difficulty. The literary genius of our country has been beyond description fertile and various, and the result is an embarrassingly rich legacy of books which challenge attention. We perhaps hardly realize this at home; but as one who has had some opportunity to assist in the studies of English literature by those of other races and countries who have been drawn to our poetry and prose, I can speak of it with certainty. Seen at a little distance, our books resemble an enchanted country of infinite beauty and adventure, of romantic dreamlands and strenuous and fruitful tillage, of gallant action and gentle contemplation, of immense conjecture, informed reasoning and home affection. Never was there the equal of this wonderful expression, which has been in progress for centuries on centuries, and is still flourishing and fascinating even some of those who are involved in a war against us.

Indeed, anyone who walks into a good bookshop will readily

away the bewildering wealth of the items ; and anyone who is moved to explore what has been written in English on a chosen subject, or in a particular form, knows what an abundance of books comes his way, some of them celebrated, some little regarded, but all making an appeal as soon as sampled. Life is short ; but that is the situation. Think of the Elizabethan dramatists ; or of the diarists ; or of the writers on wild nature and country life.

It is at this point that the virtue and merit of the men (and women) whose critical faculties are embodied in the plain form of select lists of books appear in their true honours. I blush to commend these modest persons, upon whose work the rest of us so often erect our merry-coloured marquees. They seem to desire nothing but the private room behind the grand display of literature which they keep in order. I will not call them infallible. Even the present list of standard reading, which is masterly, has its omissions (for instance, among the critics, I miss Eneas Sweetland Dallas, who detected the subconscious as the actual writing force before the term was invented). But when I have taken advantage of all the indications that this list contains, it will be time for me to issue my own addenda and corrigenda. At present there is nothing for it but to proceed with this "delightful guide," and later on I will ask if George Darley's poems ought not to be popularized in the later editions.*

The second World War has taught us to look homewards even more than the first. This catalogue of books is a view of England in her most imperial, yet most local, greatness. I do not forget that American authors are there too. Well, they write English ; and I see that Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage* is not overlooked. If I had had any doubts, that fact alone would have driven them off. Once again, English bookmanship is in form.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

* My thanks are due to Mr. Blunden for pointing out this oversight which has now been corrected.—F. S. S.

INTRODUCTION

THE demand for *The English Classics Book List* (No. 168) issued by the National Book Council in 1941 showed that there was a large public displaying a lively interest in the great literary achievements of British writers. To some it may seem strange that this interest should be sustained, and in many be aroused for the first time, during a period of war in which few people escape without upheaval of their private lives and greatly lengthened hours of work. To publishers, booksellers and librarians with memories of the 1914-1919 phase of the war this renaissance of good reading came not as a surprise but as a reminder of the importance of their work. It was the extent of the renaissance which was surprising, and it may doubtless be explained by the character of the new war which has mobilized men and women in great numbers for action which either fails to arise or comes only intermittently; by the urge of young men and women to seek a fuller understanding of the civilization they are called upon to fight for and respect; by the dark hours spent by those at home, when as targets instead of attackers, they seek peace of mind and tranquillity of soul in the mental refreshment which lies so readily to hand in books.

The English Classics list was limited to those books which were then available in four popular series: Collins' Pocket Classics, Everyman's Library, Nelson Classics, and The World's Classics. The present list is not confined to any series, but is an attempt to provide a bibliography listing every work written in English which by common consent is termed a classic, and the great standard works of literature, excluding technical works, which competent judges consider to be essential reading for the cultured and educated. It should be noted that the term English literature is taken to include the literature of the United States of America, and it has been the compiler's aim to include all those books which have come to be regarded as English classics on both sides of the Atlantic.

Briefly, the principles which have governed the compilation are:

- (1) To exclude the works of living authors.
- (2) To exclude children's books except those which are widely read by adults as well as children. For

INTRODUCTION

example, to exclude Ballantyne's *Coral Island*, but to include Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

- (3) To include English translations of Greek and Roman classics only in the few cases where they have become English classics in themselves, read for their literary interest and greatness of style.
- (4) To give particulars of publisher and price for books in print only by one publisher, and where there are two or more editions available, to indicate the price of the cheapest good editions. For example, an entry (Routledge, 8/6) means that this is the only edition in print; one stating (from 3/6) means that there are two or more editions, of which the cheapest is 3/6. The books which are in print only in one of the four series named above, and by no other publisher, are so indicated. Here the initial letter of the series is used instead of the publisher's name; that is, E (Everyman) instead of Dent, C instead of Collins; N instead of Nelson; W (World's Classics) instead of the Oxford University Press. This conforms with the practice adopted in the former list. Books now out of print and likely to remain so for some time are marked O.P.

The greatest difficulties in issuing such a list as this in wartime are that shortage of paper and other materials, bookbinding hold-ups, etc., often put an essential book temporarily out of stock for many months or for the duration of the war. Hence the reader may find that some of the books listed may not be readily available. The prices given cannot be guaranteed as accurate now or certain to continue in force; in the majority of cases, the results of more than three years of war have already necessitated increases varying from sixpence to two shillings and sixpence, or more. Thus most books published at 3/6 are now 4/6 or 5/-. Everyman's Library, World's Classics, and Collins' Classics, formerly 2/-, are now 3/- each volume; Nelson Classics formerly 1/6 are now 2/6. Every endeavour has been made to give current prices for most of the books and booksellers will be able to advise of any changes.

Most of the classics and standard books are available in moderately priced reprints, but in order to increase the usefulness

of the list to librarians, booksellers, and private book-buyers reference is made in many instances to standard editions and to the great series of books issued by the University Presses and other publishers. Thus, under Wordsworth, particulars are given of de Selincourt's standard texts; under Ben Jonson, in addition to particulars of the cheap reprints, a note will be found of the definitive edition now in progress.

Books by twentieth-century writers have presented some difficulties to the compiler. Who can say if Barbellion will seem as great a diarist to 1960 as he did to 1920? Who knows if the late Stella Benson's charming wit and acute studies in character will survive another generation; and if they do, which particular books of hers will be read? The obvious answer must be so emphatic that the compiler has not hesitated to rely mainly on his own fancies and reading. Benson's *Poor Man*, which is included, may appear to some an inferior work to her *Goodbye Stranger* which is not, but that must be for individual preference to decide. It may be asserted with some confidence, however, that no book by any modern writer has been included which is not a book of considerable merit. The compiler will be grateful for readers' comments and suggestions not only on this, but on any aspect of the list. If it achieves the purpose for which it was published, the list will help readers, book-buyers and those engaged in the handling of books professionally by providing in convenient form for reference and study bibliographical details of the glories of English literature from Beowulf and Chaucer to James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

Most readers want to own a personal library, and every new house or flat built after the war should have a room with ample space for book shelving. There is no more delightful and important pastime than buying books, and few pleasures are so cheaply obtained. In time of war, prepare for peace is an axiom which applies not only to governments but also to the governed.

The National Book Council, which was created to encourage reading, help readers, and to promote the cause of books, will gladly answer enquiries from members, and give information about books of every kind. Membership is open to all. For particulars, write to the Secretary, National Book Council, 3 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2.

F. SEYMOUR SMITH

PUBLISHERS' NAMES KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

Allen & Unwin	George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
Appl.	D. Appleton-Century Co. Inc.
E. Arnold	Edward Arnold & Co.
Arrow.	J. W. Arrowsmith (London) Ltd.
Bell	G. Bell & Sons Ltd.
Benn	Ernest Benn Ltd.
Black	Adam & Charles Black Ltd.
Blackie	Blackie & Son Ltd.
Blackwell	Basil Blackwell & Mott Ltd.
Blackwood	W. Blackwood & Sons Ltd.
Burns O.	Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd.
C	Collins' Pocket Classics (see Collins)
C.U.P.	Cambridge University Press.
Cape	Jonathan Cape Ltd.
Cass.	Cassell & Co. Ltd.
Chap. & H.	Chapman & Hall Ltd.
Chatto	Chatto & Windus.
Cobden-Sanderson	R. Cobden-Sanderson Ltd.
Collins	William Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd.
Const.	Constable & Co. Ltd.
Peter Davies	Peter Davies Ltd.
Dent	J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.
Dobell	P. J. & A. E. Dobell.
Duck.	Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd.
E.	Everyman's Library (see Dent).
E. & S.	Eyre & Spottiswoode (Publishers) Ltd.
Faber	Faber & Faber Ltd.
Ginn	Ginn & Co. Ltd.
Gollancz	Victor Gollancz Ltd.
Gowans	Gowans & Gray Ltd.
Grayson	Grayson & Grayson Ltd.
Harper	Harper & Brothers.
Harr.	George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.
Heine.	William Heinemann Ltd.
Hersant	W. E. Hersant Ltd.
Hodder	Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.
Hocarth	Hocarth Press.
Hurst	Hurst & Blackett Ltd.
Hutch.	Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.
Jenkins	Herbert Jenkins Ltd.
H. Joseph	Herbert Joseph Ltd.
Lane	John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd.
Laurie	T. Werner Laurie Ltd.
Longmans	Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.
Low	Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd.
MacLehose	Alexander MacLehose & Co.
Mac.	Macmillan & Co. Ltd.
Man. Univ. Pr.	Manchester University Press.
Meth.	Methuen & Co. Ltd.
Murray	John Murray.
N	Nelson Classics (see Nelson).
Nelson	Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.
Nisbet	James Nisbet & Co. Ltd.
Nonesuch	Nonesuch Press Ltd.
D. Nutt	David Nutt.
Oliver & Boyd	Oliver & Boyd Ltd.
O.U.P.	Oxford University Press.
K. Paul	Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd.
Penguin	Penguin Books Ltd.
Putnam	Putnam & Co. Ltd.
Richards	Richards Press Ltd.
Rout.	George Routledge & Sons Ltd.
Scribner	Charles Scribner's Sons Ltd.
Secker	Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.
Shakespeare Head Press	Shakespeare Head Press Ltd.
Sheed & Ward	Sheed & Ward Ltd.
Sheldon Pr.	Sheldon Press (see S.P.C.K.).
S. & J.	Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd.
S.P.C.K.	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
W	World's Classics (see O.U.P.).
Ward, Lock	Ward, Lock & Co. Ltd.
Warne	Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd.
Watts	C. A. Watts & Co. Ltd.
Williams & Norgate	Williams & Norgate Ltd.
Yale	Yale University Press.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, JOURNALS AND LETTERS

TALKING to others about ourselves is the most popular form of egotism. From this aspect of humanity come the two extremes of boredom and fascination. The books in this section are by those who have not only talked, but have written down for an unknown audience what they thought of themselves, of the world they lived in, the people they knew and the things they did. Here is no boredom, but some of the most fascinating and varied reading in the world of books.

Set down with scientific lucidity, the heartrending suffering and bravery of Barbellion keeps company with the wit and malice of Byron, whose letters may be by the greatest of egotistical cads, but are certainly by one of the greatest of letter writers; the tenderness and romantic excitement of the Browning correspondence may be followed by the acidulous percipience and wordly-wise precepts of Chesterfield.

Scawen Blunt has things of historical interest and importance to tell us, apart from the self-revelation of a remarkable man. Yet the adorable Dorothy Osborne, though she lived in times of national anguish and action is mainly concerned with her lover, her hopes, her dogs and the fireside dreams of a young woman kept apart from her fiancé by the demands of war and state. Selfishly we are grateful for the separation for without it we should have been deprived of a self-portrait of a charming girl who wrote as she felt and wrote all the better for her simplicity and understanding.

The greatest and most garrulous of English diarists kept much to himself when he was alive, but fortunately for posterity made sure that people who never knew him should know more about Pepys than he knew himself. Any man who occupied a state position and lived through the Fire of London could have interested us in the events of his time, but Pepys did not forget his quarrels, his meannesses, his scrapes and escapades, and the world of readers has blessed him for it ever since his shorthand was deciphered. In the same circle is Parson Woodesforde with his enormous dinners, and Kilvert the simple curate flushed to naïve excitement by the lively glances and curls of the young girls to whom he was a favoured guest at tea-time.

Those who read Dorothy Wordsworth will realise the debt her

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brother owed to her observation of natural beauty and tender sympathy and may perhaps be led to turn to her biography for the full story of her poignant life. To leave her and go to Haydon is to travel from the country to the town, where he was one of a circle which included nearly every great writer of his day. The incomparable accounts he gives of his meetings with Lamb, Hazlitt and Keats overshadow the story of his own artistic struggles which lead him, unfulfilled, to a tragic death.

Not overlooked by any reader, must be the great pages of De Quincey's work, written in prose of architectural beauty; the quietude and small talk of the unhappy Cowper; the cynical, patrician gossip of Walpole on the great people and events of his time.

ADAMS, HENRY (1838-1919)

THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS. 1907. (Cons.) o.p. A classic in modern American literature written with charm and irony. The same author's *Mont. Saint Michel and Chartres*, 1913, Cons., 12/6, should also be noted

BARBELLION, W. N. P. (Bruce Frederick Cummings) (1889-1919)

THE JOURNAL OF A DISAPPOINTED MAN. 1919. (Charto, 4/6)

BAXTER, RICHARD (1615-1691)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. 1696. (E, 3/-, edited and abridged by J. M. Lloyd Thomas)

This abridgement of the lengthy *Reliquiae Baxterianae* helps to keep alive the memory of the author of the once popular *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* (1650). An army chaplain for the Puritans, Baxter suffered later from Judge Jeffreys' brutal wrath and was imprisoned

BELL, GERTRUDE LOWTHIAN (1868-1926)

LETTERS. 1927; and EARLIER LETTERS. 1937. (Benn, 8/6 and 15/-)

BEWICK, THOMAS (1753-1828)

MEMOIRS OF THOMAS BEWICK, by himself. 1862. o.p.

As simple and homely a book as was the man. This artist and craftsman, whose engravings of birds are amongst the best of their kind, wrote the story of his life for his children. It has been called a 'golden' book and is worth cherishing and recommending

BLUNT, WILFRID SCAWEN (1840-1922)

MY DIARIES. 1919-1920. (Secker) o.p.

BROWNING, ELIZABETH BARRETT (1806-1861), AND ROBERT (1812-1889)

THE BROWNING LETTERS. 1899. (Murray, 10/6)

BURKE, EDMUND (1729-1797)

LETTERS. (From 3/-)

BURNEY, FRANCES (Madame D'Arblay) (1752-1840)

DIARY AND LETTERS. 1842. (Rout., 12/-; standard edition: 6 vols. Mac., 1904. o.p., selection in E, 3/-)

BURNS, ROBERT (1759-1796)

LETTERS. (Selection: Collins, 3/6; standard edition: O.U.P., 2 vols., 30/-)

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BUXTON, SIR THOMAS FOWELL (1786-1845)

MEMOIRS. 1848. (E, 3/-) The writer was a philanthropist whose life-work was the reform of criminal law and the abolition of slavery

BYRON, GEORGE GORDON NOEL. 6th Baron Byron (1788-1824)

LETTERS. (Selection in E, 3/-; standard edition: 6 vols. Murray)

CARLYLE, JANE WELSH (1801-1866)

LETTERS. 1883. (Murray, 21/-)

CARLYLE, THOMAS (1795-1881)

REMINISCENCES. 1881. (E, 3/-)

CHESTERFIELD, PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE. 4th Earl of (1694-1773)

LETTERS TO HIS SON AND OTHERS. 1774. (Selections from 3/-; larger editions from 12/6)

CIBBER, COLLEY (1671-1757)

APOLOGY FOR HIS LIFE. 1740. (E, 3/-)

COWPER, WILLIAM (1731-1800)

LETTERS. (Selections from 3/-)

CREEVEY, THOMAS (1768-1838)

THE CREEVEY PAPERS: a selection from the correspondence and diaries. Edited by Sir Herbert Maxwell. 1903. (Murray, 15/-)

CREEVEY'S LIFE AND TIMES: a further selection. Edited by John Gore. 1934. (Murray, 6/-) The editor of the later selection says of the earlier that it was 'a source of endless entertainment to the reading public, of considerable value to the social historian and of much interest to the student of politics'

CROMWELL, OLIVER. See under *Biography*

DAVIES, WILLIAM HENRY (1871-1940)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SUPER TRAMP. 1908. (Cape, 5/-)

The naïveté which enabled Davies 'to stand and stare' and write a memorable poem about it gives this account of his adventures and escapades a disarming charm. A man who could survive the rough and tumble of hobo life in America and the dreariness of a London doss-house was no ordinary poet and his book is no ordinary book

DE QUINCEY, THOMAS (1785-1859)

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM EATER. 1821. (From 1/6)

ELLIS, HAVELOCK (1859-1940)

MY LIFE. 1940. (Heine, 15/-)

EVELYN, JOHN (1620-1706)

DIARY, 1641-1706. (From 6/-)

FANSHAWE, ANNE, LADY (1625-1680)

MEMOIRS. 1829. (A well-edited reprint, Lane, 1905, is now o.p.)

Sir Richard Fanshawe was ambassador from Charles II to Portugal and Madrid, and his wife's memoirs are full of charm and interest

FOX, GEORGE (1624-1691)

JOURNAL, 1694. (E, 3/- revised; standard edition: C.U.P., 2 vols., 40/-)

The journal of the founder of the Society of Friends has more than an historical interest. Beneath the simplicity of the man and his creed lay the complexities of the mystic with the strength of a martyr

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FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN (1706-1790)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. 1868. (From 3/-)

GARLAND, HAMLIN (1860-1940)

A SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER. 1917. o.p. A famous story of the rigours of frontier life in America. *A Daughter of the Middle Border*, 1921, is the sequel

GIBBON, EDWARD (1737-1794)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. 1796. (From 3/-)

GOSSE, SIR EDMUND (1849-1928)

FATHER AND SON. 1907. (Heine., 3/6) A modern classic, revealing with irony and understanding the growth of mind and independent thought of the famous critic. It might well be read after Butler's great novel of family relationships *The Way of All Flesh*

GRAY, THOMAS (1716-1771)

LETTERS. (From 3/-) These letters of the author of the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* are amongst the best in the language

GREVILLE, CHARLES CAVENDISH FULKE (1794-1865)

MEMOIRS. 3 series: 1874, 1885, 1887. (Longmans.) o.p. A fascinating, gossip work, providing historians with material and society with scandal since Henry Reeves issued the second and third series with many suppressed passages. The period covered is from George IV to the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. A revised edition, with authentic text, edited by Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford, was issued in a very limited edition (630 copies, £15, 15/-) in 1927

HAYDON, BENJAMIN (1786-1846)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND JOURNALS. 1853. (W, 3/-) The friend of Keats and Hazlitt, in his sole book showed himself a great writer, whereas he lived and died thinking he was a great painter. Through the absorbing pages of his journal flash all the famous writers of his age

HAZLITT, WILLIAM (1778-1830)

LIBER AMORIS. 1823. o.p. The story of his heart. Bitter and anguished

HERBERT, EDWARD (Lord Herbert of Cherbury) (1583-1648)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. 1764. o.p.

HICKEY, WILLIAM (1749-1830)

MEMOIRS. 4 vols. 1913-1925. (Hurst, 66/-) The diary was kept to 1809 and gives an incomparable picture of political life in England and India, with racy personal anecdotes

HOLCROFT, THOMAS (1745-1809)

MEMOIRS. 1816. o.p. The story of a stable boy who became an actor, novelist, and author of more than thirty plays, of which the best known is *The Road to Ruin*

HOPKINS, GERARD MANLEY (1844-1889)

LETTERS TO ROBERT BRIDGES. 1935. (O.U.P., 2 vols., 30/-)

In 1938 *Further Letters* appeared (O.U.P., 16/-) The three volumes may take their place with those of Keats as the sensitive and absorbing letters of a poet who influenced the course of English poetry. His only volume of verse was not published until 1918

HUDSON, WILLIAM HENRY (1841-1922)

FARAWAY AND LONG AGO. 1918. (E, 3/- and in uniform edition, Dent, 6/-)

A LITTLE BOY LOST. 1905. (From 3/6)

HUNT, JAMES HENRY LEIGH (1784-1859)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. (W, 3/-)

JEFFERIES, RICHARD (1848-1887)

THE STORY OF MY HEART. 1883. (From 3/6)

JEFFERSON, THOMAS (1743-1826)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. 1829. o.p.

KEATS, JOHN (1795-1821)

LETTERS. (Selection from 2/6; standard edition edited by M. Buxton Forman, O.U.P., 12/6) In addition to the poignant story of the poet's life which these letters tell, the reader is given an insight to his critical and creative mind which no other book will give in the same degree

KEMPE, MARGERY (b. 1373?)

THE BOOK OF MARGERY KEMPE. 1936. (Cape, 6/-)

KILVERT, FRANCIS (1840-1879)

DIARY, 1870-1879. Edited by William Plomer, 1938-1940. (Cape, 3 vols., 12/6 each)

LAMB, CHARLES (1775-1834)

LETTERS. Edited by E. V. Lucas. 1935. (Meth., Dent, 3 vols., 60/- o.p.)

This was the first complete edition, and includes the letters of Mary Lamb. Selection in E, 6/-

LAWRENCE, THOMAS EDWARD (1888-1935)

LETTERS. Edited by David Garnett. 1938. (Cape, 15/-)

LOVETT, WILLIAM (1800-1887)

THE LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF WILLIAM LOVETT. By Himself. 1876. (Bell, 2 vols., 2/- each) The author was a Chartist and his story is of importance in the social history of the nineteenth century

MANSFIELD, KATHERINE (1888-1923)

JOURNAL. 1927. (Cons., 7/6) LETTERS. 2 vols. 1928. (Cons., 15/-)

MILL, JOHN STUART (1806-1873)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY. 1873. (W, 3/-)

MONTAGU, LADY MARY WORTLEY (1689-1762)

LETTERS. 1762-1767. (From 3/-)

MOORE, GEORGE (1852-1933)

CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN. 1888. (Heine., 6/-)

HAIL AND FAREWELL. 1911-1913. (Heine., 3 vols., 7/6 each)

MEMOIRS OF MY DEAD LIFE. 1906. (Heine., 6/-)

NEVINSON, HENRY WOODD (1856-1941)

CHANGES AND CHANCES. 1923. o.p.

MORE CHANGES AND CHANCES. 1925. (Nisbet, 15/-)

LAST CHANGES, LAST CHANCES. 1928. (Nisbet, 15/-)

OSBORNE, DOROTHY (Lady Temple) (1627-1695)

LETTERS. Edited by Judge Parry. 1888. (E, 3/-; standard edition edited by G. C. Moore Smith, O.U.P., 21/-) These charming letters were addressed to Sir William Temple. They bring the lovers and their times close to the reader.

PEPYS, SAMUEL (1633-1703)

DIARY. Edited by Lord Braybrooke. 1825. Selections from the famous diary are available from 2/6; Braybrooke's complete text is available from 6/-, while the standard edition edited by H. B. Wheatley is in 3 vols. (Bell, 63/-)

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ROBINSON, HENRY CRABB (1775-1867)

CORRESPONDENCE. (Selections edited by Edith Morley, O.U.P., 10/6; and *Correspondence with Wordsworth and His Circle*, 2 vols. O.U.P., 42/-) Crabb Robinson was one of the greatest talkers of his time; he knew everybody worth knowing and his diary and correspondence are amongst the chief source books for literary historians and critics. A valuable collection of his literary references is *Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers*, edited by Edith Morley, Dent., 3 vols., 31/6

SCOTT, SIR WALTER (1711-1832)

JOURNAL. 1890. (From 4/-)

SOUTHEY, ROBERT (1774-1843)

LETTERS. (Selection: W, 3/-)

STERNE, LAURENCE (1713-1768)

LETTERS TO ELIZA. 1775. (From 3/-; standard edition of Sterne's Letters. O.U.P., 30/-)

STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS (1850-1894)

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*'And she me caught in her arms long and small,
And therewithal so sweetly did me kiss,
And softly said, "Dear heart, how like you this?"'*

may well look once again at the date, for there is little in English poetry before the Elizabethans with which it may be compared.

The three mighty pillars of English poetic drama, Marlowe, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, should not be allowed to thrust too much into the background the lesser men, who in any other century would have been dramatic writers of the first magnitude. Dekker, Beaumont and Fletcher, Greene, Webster and Ford, to name only a few, all produced work full of vitality and beauty.

In the seventeenth century much of the work of the minor writers repays study. Few centuries have produced so many lovely and sometimes profound poems kept in common knowledge by the scholarship and taste of anthologists. Such treasures as Richard Flecknoe's Invocation of Silence with its extraordinarily vivid metaphor: 'Frost o' th' mouth; and thaw o' th' mind' will be found in Massingham's fine anthology. Milton bestrides two-thirds of this century, and gave us some of our finest lyrical verse and our one great epic.

In Dryden's work there is something of the characteristic genius of his century combined with the less spontaneous and more artificial note of the age of Pope. In the eighteenth century some readers find the poetry which wins their greatest regard, but while it must be admitted that the satire and wit of the greatest poets of this age have no equal, few deny that from about 1725 to 1798 English poetry proleed its supreme place to prose.

Between the year which saw the first edition of The Lyrical

*Ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge, to the death of Tennyson near the close of the nineteenth century, lies a period which produced some of the greatest English poetry. Keats, Shelley, Byron and Blake would in themselves make any century noteworthy; yet as the years went on and the startling poems of Browning followed with Tennyson's seemingly unending flow of poetic music making the reading of poetry almost a national pastime for the middle-classes, it seemed that the Victorian age would eclipse the Elizabethan and Jacobean. It might have done if English drama had survived, but not even in prose was anything noteworthy produced for the stage. Between Shelley's *The Cenci* and Tennyson's *Becket* there was little attempt to bring dramatic verse from the study to the stage.*

Bridges and Hardy together bridge the century, and from them we come to the modern writers. It is not possible to say who will survive in popular estimation, but it does not seem likely that the best of W. H. Davies, Rupert Brooke, Flecker, Housman, D. H. Lawrence, Wilfred Owen and Yeats, can ever be forgotten. With the death of Yeats another chapter of English literature was closed, but critics of fifty years hence may agree that in his work is seen the characteristic beauties of English lyrical poetry at its best developing into the harder esoteric style of writers of the present era.

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